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Item 99 (hh) of the preliminary list*
General and complete disarmament

Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report outlines the views of Member States with regard to achieving the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, in particular on effective nuclear disarmament measures, including elements of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons.

* A/73/50.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 72/251 on follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament, the General Assembly:

(a) Underlined the strong support expressed at its high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament, held on 26 September 2013, for taking urgent and effective measures to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons (para. 1);

(b) Called for urgent compliance with the legal obligations and the fulfilment of the commitments undertaken on nuclear disarmament and endorsed the wide support expressed at the high-level meeting for a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons (paras. 2 and 3);

(c) Also called for the urgent commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on effective nuclear disarmament measures to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons, including, in particular, on a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons (para. 4);

(d) Requested the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States with regard to achieving the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, in particular on effective nuclear disarmament measures, including elements of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons, and to submit a report thereon to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session, and also to transmit the report to the Conference on Disarmament (para. 20).

2. Pursuant to that request, a note verbale was sent to Member States on 6 February 2018 inviting them to provide information on the subject. The replies received are contained in section II below. Any views received after 15 May 2018 will be posted on the website of the Office for Disarmament Affairs in the original language of submission. No addenda will be issued.

II. Replies received from Governments

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]
[11 May 2018]

Cuba shares the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. In this regard, Cuba has participated actively in the main multilateral forums at which the topic is considered, such as the Conference on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission, the conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination and in the Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and their preparatory committees.

As a State party to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean that created the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated area, part of a region formally proclaimed as a zone of peace, Cuba has called upon nuclear-weapon States and others protected by the so-called nuclear umbrella to fulfil their unequivocal obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Although more than 20 years have gone by since the International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons,

declared the use of nuclear weapons unlawful, very little progress has been made towards the total elimination of such weapons, and nuclear deterrence continues to be a core element of the military defence and security doctrines of some States. It is even more alarming that some States are considering the use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States in response to attacks using non-nuclear weapons.

Cuba opposes the enhancement and modernization of existing nuclear weapons, their means of delivery and related infrastructure, which is inconsistent with the obligation to adopt effective measures towards nuclear disarmament.

Cuba constructively supported the General Assembly negotiations which culminated in the approval on 7 July 2017 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which establishes a legally binding international norm prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons, without any exceptions or mitigating circumstances.

On 31 January 2018, Cuba became the fifth State to ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, as a demonstration of its political will and commitment to a world free from nuclear weapons. Cuba calls for the early entry into force of the Treaty and its universalization. It reaffirms that the only effective guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination, in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner, within a clearly defined time frame.

Ecuador

[Original: Spanish]
[15 May 2018]

The date 7 July 2017 will go down in the annals of history as a milestone in the quest for universal peace, since on that date a conference convened by the General Assembly adopted a Treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons. These weapons, whose devastating consequences for humanity are beyond doubt, will be prohibited by a legally binding universal instrument that will be open for signature by all States. Ecuador actively participated in the process that led to the convening of the negotiating conference for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and in the negotiations that culminated in the approval of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

The Constitution of Ecuador, within the framework of international relations, promotes peace and universal disarmament and condemns the development and use of weapons of mass destruction and the imposition of military bases or military facilities of States in the territory of other States. It also prohibits the development, production, stockpiling, import, transport, transfer and use of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, as well as the release of nuclear residues and toxic waste into the national territory. Ecuador, in addition to being part of the nuclear-weapon-free zone established by the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, has ratified all of the main international instruments related to non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, notably the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the additional protocols on safeguards and cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

It is a matter of particular concern that the nuclear Powers have embarked upon the modernization of their nuclear weapons, delivery systems and platforms and that they have not reduced the role of nuclear weapons in their military doctrines, thereby violating both the spirit and the letter of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

Ecuador considers it regrettable that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has not yet entered into force owing to a reluctance to ratify it on the part of countries listed in annex 2 of the Treaty.

The approval of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has established that these weapons are contrary to international law, as its provisions include procedures to enable nuclear-weapon States to eliminate those weapons, before or after their accession to the Treaty. Until the total elimination of such weapons is achieved, nuclear-weapon States must in all circumstances refrain from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear-weapon State by concluding a universal, legally binding instrument on effective, unconditional, non-discriminatory and irrevocable security assurances to be provided by nuclear-weapon States to all non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of such weapons.

It is important to continue advocating in all forums for the elimination of these weapons; Ecuador therefore supports the annual celebration of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, on 26 September.

Georgia

[Original: English]
[23 February 2018]

Georgia plays an important role in supporting the existing global nuclear security architecture through implementing its components at the national level, providing sufficient commitment to the international legal instruments and, among other actions, joining global initiatives in this field. Georgia has been a party to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material since 2007, has already ratified the 2005 amendment to the Convention and is therefore a full party to this international legal instrument of immense importance. Georgia has also been a party to the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism since 2010.

Georgia recognizes the necessity to fully implement Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) on the prevention of non-State actors from obtaining weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, and related materials. Considering that the resolution serves as a vital component of the international community's instrument in combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, Georgia welcomes the extension of the resolution mandate until 2021 and remains committed to its implementation. Georgia will also continue its cooperation with international organizations and regional bodies.

Georgia actively participates in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and the Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction.

With the support of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Georgia adopted its Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plan 2015–2019. Georgia is currently elaborating a new regulation for the physical protection of nuclear material; in cooperation with the European Commission, acquired modernized equipment to conduct nuclear forensics investigations; adopted new legislation, such as the Procedure for Responding to the Illegal Trafficking of Nuclear and Radioactive Substances; and, in collaboration with the United States, established a Joint Maritime Operations Centre on the Black Sea coast to facilitate the inter-agency exchange of intelligence to address maritime threats, including nuclear smuggling.

Lebanon

[Original: Arabic]
[15 May 2018]

Lebanon wishes to make the following points:

Lebanon does not possess or produce weapons of mass destruction. It complies with the United Nations resolutions in that regard and is opposed to the legality of the threat or use of such weapons.

It welcomes and supports all initiatives aimed at bringing about general and complete disarmament, especially in the Middle East, and emphasizes that the region should be free of weapons of mass destruction. It is, however, concerned at the failure of the Israeli enemy to comply with international law. The Israel enemy maintains a nuclear arsenal that constitutes a constant threat to all the States of the region and consequently to international peace and security.

It is essential for the Arab States to continue to call for the establishment of a region free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, because that is the only available option for coping with the dangers that the nuclear armaments of the Israeli enemy and its other weapons of mass destruction represent for international peace and Arab national security.

The international community should continue to demand that all States in the region, including the Israeli enemy, should sign treaties on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons.

It is essential to unify the Arab position, step up the role of the League of Arab States and take action to acquire the scientific knowledge and secure the equipment required to protect against weapons of mass destruction. It is also vital to continue efforts to expose the Israeli enemy as a State that does not heed the call for the development and dissemination of peaceful uses of nuclear technologies in all fields that serve sustainable development and to take into account the various needs of the Arab States.

Madagascar

[Original: French]
[15 May 2018]

Each Member State must work for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Since Madagascar has ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, it is under an obligation to implement it.

Mexico

[Original: Spanish]
[14 May 2018]

Mexico believes that the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament held on 26 September 2013 demonstrated the legitimate desire of a vast majority of Member States for the United Nations to address, without delay, an issue that was the subject of the first General Assembly resolution in 1946: the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Mexico therefore welcomed the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 7 July 2017, an instrument which accorded with its well-known and extensive diplomatic efforts to promote nuclear disarmament and

non-proliferation; accordingly, Mexico deposited its instrument of ratification on 16 January 2018.

For Mexico, the negotiation and adoption of this Treaty is consistent with the obligation set out in article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, thereby contributing to its implementation. Once in force, the prohibition will be only one element of the process towards the general and complete elimination of nuclear weapons which, in turn, will complement other processes that are of high priority for the non-proliferation and disarmament regime in the context of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

In this regard, Mexico encourages those countries which have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in order to achieve its early entry into force. Mexico will also continue to participate actively in the various forums in which the nuclear disarmament agenda is considered in order to promote complementary measures.

With regard to a comprehensive convention to achieve nuclear disarmament, Mexico considers that it should include the following elements:

- Prohibitions of nuclear weapons that ensure the achievement and irreversibility of nuclear disarmament;
- Prohibitions of the stockpiling and production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices;
- Establishment of a mechanism for the elimination of existing nuclear weapons, with clear timeframes;
- Dismantling or conversion of facilities producing fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices;
- Verification mechanism under the International Atomic Energy Agency;
- Institutional arrangements that support the goals and principles of the comprehensive convention.

Morocco

[Original: French]
[8 May 2018]

The Kingdom of Morocco remains deeply convinced of the relevance of the competent United Nations mechanisms in the area of disarmament and international security. The increased effectiveness of these mechanisms remains dependent on the political will of States and respect for the obligations and commitments undertaken.

Morocco considers that the achievement of a world free from nuclear weapons necessarily depends on the efficiency of the United Nations mechanisms responsible for disarmament, in particular the Conference on Disarmament which, since its establishment, has become a unique forum for multilateral disarmament negotiations and an important body within which States are able to put forward their positions.

The Kingdom of Morocco has signed and ratified all the multilateral instruments on weapons of mass destruction and remains committed to general and complete disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament.

Morocco continues to be prepared to consider, in a constructive spirit, draft multilateral instruments and all initiatives aimed at reinvigorating the United Nations disarmament mechanisms, particularly breaking the impasse in the Conference on Disarmament.

Morocco is convinced that, as long as nuclear weapons exist, there can be no true security or effective stability at the regional and international levels.

Netherlands

[Original: English]
[9 May 2018]

At its seventy-second session, the General Assembly adopted its resolution 72/251, entitled "Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament".

The Kingdom of the Netherlands herewith submits the view of the Government of the Netherlands on the issues covered by the resolution.

The Netherlands wishes to emphasize that it fully shares the ultimate goal of resolution 72/251, a world free of nuclear weapons. The Netherlands participated at the ministerial level in the high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament, held on 26 September 2013, during which various perspectives on how to best achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world were discussed.

The Netherlands notes with regret that resolution 72/251 reflects only one particular viewpoint, while various other proposals made during the 26 September 2013 meeting were not reflected.

As stated in the explanation of vote that was read by the delegation of the Netherlands on behalf of a group of like-minded countries during the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, the resolution includes no clear references to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, while the Netherlands would have very much preferred a broader reference to the Treaty and an underlining of its pivotal importance to nuclear disarmament.

The Netherlands further regrets that, by focusing on one core element of the work of the Conference on Disarmament, the resolution does not do justice to the urgent attention that needs to be paid to the adoption of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work of the Conference and the other core issues. The Netherlands also believes that starting negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention without the participation of the States that possess nuclear weapons does not advance the overall goal of nuclear disarmament.

The Netherlands notes the postponement of the high-level meeting. At this point, no new date has been proposed. The Netherlands, in this context, reiterates that it feels that the importance of international efforts on nuclear disarmament is insufficiently emphasized by processes that are, in scope and intention, insufficiently clear and transparent. This will prevent key States from participating and is detrimental to the international trust that is fundamental for successful disarmament efforts. Instead, efforts should be focused on making progress in the context of the Treaty, with the second session of Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference having just concluded.

Russian Federation

[Original: Russian]
[15 May 2017]

We call upon all members of the international community to join as actively as possible in resolving current problems in the area of international security and stability. Among those problems are the untrammelled development of global antimissile defence systems, the development of non-nuclear, high-precision, strategic offensive weapons, problems with the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the prospect of offensive weapons being taken into outer space, and the increasing quantitative and qualitative imbalances in conventional weapons. The persistence of these problems destroys trust between States, weakens the disarmament architecture and continues to be a major obstacle to ensuring the effectiveness of disarmament efforts.

Ukraine

[Original: English]
[15 May 2018]

Ukraine is convinced that a disarmament and non-proliferation regime can be effectively strengthened through proper and timely implementation and faithful promotion of an international legal framework, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which serves as a main legally binding document in the sphere of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Despite being affected by Russian military aggression towards and occupation of Ukraine's territories, in violation of the key principles of the Treaty, as well as of the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, Ukraine continues to regard the Non-Proliferation Treaty as a cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and an essential tool for achieving the objectives of nuclear disarmament. Elaboration of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons or any additional similar instruments without the participation of nuclear States or other powerful States could not only harm international efforts aimed at enhancing existing international legal norms but also weaken the Treaty regime.

After the occupation by the Russian Federation of the integral parts of Ukraine — the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions — Ukraine lost control over nuclear facilities and materials located in these territories.

Moreover, implementation of the ideas proclaimed in the statements of officials of the Russian Federation of its right to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of Ukraine, namely, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, infringes on the non-nuclear status of Ukraine and endangers the regime of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Taking into account the above-mentioned issues, Ukraine calls on the international community and the United Nations to exert all possible efforts to maintain and strengthen the non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Ukraine supports all legal mechanisms in effect to fulfil this purpose, inter alia, the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission.